

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2009-2010 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2004.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: (per district designation)	175	Elementary schools (includes K-8)
	41	Middle/Junior high schools
	33	High schools
		K-12 schools
	249	TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 3390

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☒ Urban or large central city
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
☐ Suburban
☐ Small city or town in a rural area
☐ Rural

4. 10 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	34	32	66	6			0
K	34	25	59	7			0
1	25	32	57	8			0
2	22	25	47	9			0
3	38	29	67	10			0
4	21	29	50	11			0
5	22	19	41	12			0
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							387

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: _____ % American Indian or Alaska Native
 _____ % Asian
 _____ 72 % Black or African American
 _____ 27 % Hispanic or Latino
 _____ % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 _____ 1 % White
 _____ % Two or more races
 _____ **100 % Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 7 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	15
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	11
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	26
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	361
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.072
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	7.202

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 13 %

Total number limited English proficient 52

Number of languages represented: 1

Specify languages:

Spanish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 88 %

Total number students who qualify: 339

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 7 %

Total Number of Students Served: 29

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>20</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>21</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>39</u>	<u>1</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	95%	96%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	97%	96%	97%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	5%	14%	10%	10%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

At the end of the 2006-2007 school year, four teachers left the Burrus staff. This 14% teacher turnover was due to numerous positive factors: One teacher was promoted to a Magnet School Coordinator position within HISD, two teachers relocated to schools nearer to their residence and the fourth teacher that left returned to Burrus in the 2008-2009 school year and is currently a second grade teacher on the Burrus staff

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

Graduating class size	_____	%
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____	%
Enrolled in a community college	_____	%
Enrolled in vocational training	_____	%
Found employment	_____	%
Military service	_____	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	_____	%
Unknown	_____	%
Total	_____	%

PART III - SUMMARY

As a small, neighborhood school located in the Studewood/Independence Heights area of Houston. James D. Burrus Elementary is a place where everyone knows your name, your family, and your unique gifts and challenges. Since its founding, Burrus has served multiple generations of families, many of whom remain involved in school activities through their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Independence Heights was first settled in 1908 as black families began moving to the area from Houston. In 1910, it became the first incorporated black city in Texas. By providing their own financing, the Wright Land Company made it possible for people with small incomes to become homeowners, which has contributed to the stable, multi-generational foundation that Burrus enjoys today.

By the time a dozen or so families had moved into Independence Heights, the need for a school had become evident. As the population increased, the student body outgrew its original, two-room schoolhouse. By 1928, a new building for the school was constructed on 33rd Street. When it opened, the school was renamed in honor of James D. Burrus, a former slave who became a successful black educator. Burrus is now part of the Houston Independent School District—Texas’s largest school district and the seventh largest in the US.

Today, Burrus is a Title I school whose faculty and staff educate 387 students in pre-Kindergarten through grade five. The student population is 72% African American, 27% Hispanic, and 1% white, and 88% are economically disadvantaged as indicated by their eligibility for the Federal free and reduced meal program. Over 60% are considered at-risk for dropping out of school, and 13% are Limited-English Proficient.

The mission of Burrus Elementary is to be an exemplary school where high expectations are standard; learning is fun, exciting, and challenging; and the needs of each individual student are met. We encourage all students to realize their maximum potential and to become successful, contributing members of the community at large. In support of this mission, Burrus provides a comprehensive array of education support programs, including Special Education, Gifted and Talented, Dyslexia, English as a Second Language, and Reading First. In addition, our Fine Arts Magnet program is a great source of community pride.

The strength of Burrus Elementary’s student achievement stems from the strength of its instructional teams. The principal, content-area lead teachers, grade-level teachers, and district content consultants analyze weekly benchmark data and other school-based assessments as well as data from the Education Value-Added Assessment System and Just for the Kids. The data are used to guide instruction and plan interventions.

In grades three through five, teachers are assigned to a grade level and a content area based on their personal and professional strengths and the needs of the students. All teachers participate in research-based professional development to ensure that students are benefiting from the latest in scientifically grounded, proven educational practices.

Burrus faculty members utilize a number of educational programs to increase student achievement, including Success For All, Renzulli, Name That Book, and the Millionaire Club. Multicultural projects, well equipped science labs, technology, parent involvement activities, and fine arts competitions supplement and enhance academic instruction. Wraparound services such as conflict resolution training, character education, anger management, and Communities in Schools and school-based counseling provide additional support for students, parents, and families.

Every aspect of school activities is scrutinized and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure it meets the highest standard and aligns with our mission and vision. Only the best, most effective programs and instructional practices are kept in place, and it is this commitment to excellence and the resultant achievements that makes Burrus worthy of being named a Blue Ribbon School.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Burrus students in grades 3-5 participate in annual assessments including the TAKS (Texas Assessment of Academic Skills), a criterion-referenced instrument administered statewide. Not only has the expected level of performance risen every year, the state's expectation for the overall percent of students passing in order for a school to achieve one of four statewide academic ratings (Academically Unacceptable, Academically Acceptable, Recognized, or Exemplary) has also increased. In 2004-05, Burrus was rated Academically Acceptable. In 2008-09, with ever-increasing passing standards and ratings rigor, Burrus achieved the highest possible statewide rating—Exemplary—demonstrating that even in an atmosphere of escalating standards, Burrus's students and staff performed at the highest possible levels.

Student performance is rated as either “did not meet the standard,” “met the standard,” or “commended performance” on each section of the TAKS exam. “Meeting the standard” means the student achieved “satisfactory performance; at or above state passing standard; sufficient understanding of the mathematics TEKS curriculum.” “Commended performance” means the student demonstrated “high academic achievement; considerably above state passing standard; thorough understanding of the mathematics TEKS curriculum.” What this translates to in scores changes each year as the minimum passing standard is raised. For example, in 2003, 3rd-graders had to answer 19 of 36 items correctly in order to meet the passing standard, versus 33 of 36 to achieve commended performance. In 2009, 3rd-graders were expected to answer 23 of 36 items correctly to meet the passing standard, versus 33 of 36 for commended performance. These levels vary by grade level as well as by version of the test administered (English or Spanish).

Over the past five years, student performance on TAKS math has skyrocketed. In 2004-05, only 48% of Burrus's 3rd-graders, 50% of 4th-graders, and 52% of 5th graders passed the math TAKS. In 2008-09, 100% of students in all three grades met the passing standard, and 80% of 5th-graders achieved “commended performance,” positioning them for great success at the middle school level.

Performance on TAKS reading has been similarly stunning. In 2005, only 62% of 3rd-graders, 60% of 4th-graders, and 52% of 5th-graders passed this state exam. In 2008-09, 100% of students in all three grades met the passing standard, and an unprecedented 64% of 3rd-graders achieved “commended performance,” which bodes extremely well for the next several years of academic performance at Burrus.

In addition, 100% of 4th- and 5th-grade students in each subgroup (African American, Hispanic, and Economically Disadvantaged) passed TAKS math and TAKS reading. When tracked by grade level, the data shows that last year's 5th-graders have made significant gains. As 3rd-graders, only 79% of these same students passed TAKS reading, meaning their performance as a cohort has increased by 21 percentage points, or 27%, in just two years.

Because Burrus's leadership is capable of eliciting the highest levels of achievement from all students, the school has always made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), never missing a single year. In addition, “Gold Performance Acknowledgements” recognize campuses for high academic performance on various indicators. In 2008-09, Burrus was recognized for commended performance in Reading/ELA, Writing, Mathematics, and Science, as well as for comparable improvement in both Reading/ELA and Mathematics. More information and scores can be found here: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/accountability.html>.

Burrus students also take the Stanford 10, a norm-referenced instrument chosen by the district to provide additional evaluation data in the form of scaled scores, national and local percentile ranks and stanines, grade equivalents, and normal curve equivalents. Progress for Limited-English Proficient students is monitored by the TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System), and students in the early grades participate in the TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory), which provides a comprehensive picture of their reading/language arts development.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Burrus convenes multiple levels of instructional teams to review student achievement data, plan for student interventions, and impact student achievement. Whether by grade level (PreK-2), by content area (grades 3-5), or by student need (limited-English proficiency, dyslexia, special education, etc.), teams of Burrus teachers, instructional supervisors, and coordinators stand ready to analyze data and implement effective, research-based programs as necessary to ensure student success. Teachers participate in large-group, small-group, and team-based training throughout the year to understand new test items or instruments, advances in data disaggregation, and instructional methods that will provide interventions and supports commensurate with student need, and the School Improvement Plan sets annual goals for teacher training as well as for academic benchmarks and programs.

In addition to norm- and criterion-referenced test data gleaned from the TAKS, Stanford 10, TELPAS, and TPRI exams described in the preceding section, Burrus teachers gather anecdotal and survey data from staff and parents, diagnostic data from computer-based instruments, and other assessment information from progress reports, report cards, tutorial sessions, and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to provide an ever-expanding, comprehensive picture of each student's academic strengths and challenges. Grading periods of nine weeks include midterm benchmark tests that provide snapshots of student performance over time. Scores of 70 or below trigger teacher-written IEPs that are used in intervention tutorials that immediately begin to alter the student's academic trajectory. At all times, these data are communicated to parents via email, phone calls, and on-campus meetings designed to involve families in supporting their child's success. Mr. Woods, Burrus's Principal, always has his finger on the pulse of student achievement as well. The computerized grading system allows him to check up-to-the-minute reports. Open House and grade-level meetings with parents let him interface with parents in smaller groups and individually while allowing teachers and parents to communicate.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Burrus relies on multiple methods and avenues to communicate assessment results to parents, students, and the community.

GradeSpeed provides online access to daily grades, daily attendance, and homework assignments and notifies parents via emails or text messages when their child is absent or when a grade drops below a certain level.

Connect-ED is the district's automated outreach and emergency tool that Burrus customizes with messages regarding any number of topics, including notifications of upcoming testing dates, report card distributions, and on-campus parent meetings of all types.

Three times each school year, Burrus faculty and staff host grade-level parent meetings where the principal and various district and campus-based instructional staff interact with, communicate with, and invite discussion from parents, grandparents, and extended family members. Parents and families have come to trust these "town hall meetings" as a place where they can hear and be heard, thus connecting them with Burrus events and information.

Flyers and newsletters from faculty and staff communicate classroom and school business, important dates, and school highlights to students, parents, and community members, as does the school's website here: <http://es.houstonisd.org/burrusES/home.html>. Individual, school-provided student planners facilitate daily written communication with parents, and impromptu parent conferences in the hallways, outside as students are being picked up, and during home visits demonstrate teachers' commitment to ongoing contact.

Site-based Decision-making Committee meetings offer a more formal avenue for communicating via the participation of two community-based representatives that meet monthly with other elected school staff to review school activities, performance, and policies.

The Houston Independent School District also maintains a dynamic website (<http://www.houstonisd.org>) that communicates a variety of performance data and analysis as well as events, public notices, and information on district programs. Specific information on student performance, accountability, and program evaluation reports can be found here: <http://www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/ResearchAccountability>.

Finally, Burrus's academic performance over time can be accessed via the state's website by clicking here <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/accountability.html>.

4. Sharing Success:

Since 1911, Burrus has provided a consistent port in an often-turbulent social, political, and economic storm for the people of Independence Heights and has done so through its longstanding partnerships with area businesses and churches. These institutions provide the foundation for sharing Burrus's successes with the community at large, and will be the primary channel through which notification of Burrus's Blue Ribbon status is conveyed. Each year, Mr. Woods participates in the Independent Heights Revival, a focused gathering of 14 area ministers who seek ongoing updates about the school's academic progress and facilitate generous community gifts to students of clothing, shoes, and school supplies.

Communicating with other schools in a district our size takes many forms. Mr. Woods attends monthly principal meetings as well as district-wide meetings of administrative staff. Each of these offer Burrus the opportunity to network and share our successes with other leaders as well as to learn effective practices that we may wish to adapt for our learners.

Burrus faculty members have also participated in panel discussions as part of a Capacity-Building grant awarded by the Texas Education Agency under its Texas Reading First Initiative. Houston was one of only five districts state-wide to receive an additional year of funding in 2009, and Burrus was one of three schools (of 47) chosen to serve as study/demonstration sites for best practices. Under this grant, Burrus will produce a brochure and DVD to showcase our work, and educators from around the state as well as internationally (England, Russia) have already begun to visit to study our operations. In addition to sharing best practices, Burrus has also shared funding, distributing \$1,000,000 to 25 other elementary schools for literacy programming. We are proud of our successes and will continue to strengthen our avenues for communicating and sharing with schools in our city and state.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The Burrus curriculum incorporates standards set forth by the Texas Education Agency in its Texas Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) framework. The statewide TEKS are extensive, divided by subject area and grade level, and can be found online here: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6148>. The local curriculum was internally developed by Houston ISD staff and is called CLEAR: Clarifying Learning to Enhance Achievement Results. District-developed documents allow teachers and administrators to reference four crucial instructional supports: the Vertical Alignment Matrix, Year-At-A-Glance, TEKS/TAKS Correlations, and Horizontal Alignment Planning Guides.

The math TEKS cover number, operation, and quantitative reasoning; patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking; geometry and spatial reasoning; measurement; probability and statistics; and underlying processes and mathematical tools.

Burrus's math curriculum resources include the enVision MATH program by Pearson. This daily problem-based interactive math program uses visual learning strategies to deepen conceptual understanding by making meaningful connections for students. Ongoing diagnosis and intervention and daily data-driven intervention ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Students can also access from school or from home an ExxonMobil-funded math program called Reasoning Minds (RM), a computer-based program with study guides, math games that teach math theory, and individualized feedback. Burrus students in grades 2-5 use Reasoning Minds approximately three hours per week to increase math performance and engagement in math concepts.

The Reading/Language Arts TEKS cover listening and speaking, writing, reading fluency, reading comprehension, text structures, phonological awareness, word identification, print awareness, oral and written communication, vocabulary development, literary concepts, literary response, inquiry, research, grammar and usage, spelling, penmanship, capitalization, punctuation, writing processes, and exposure to a variety of texts from diverse cultures. For students whose first language is not English, the students' native language serves as a foundation for English language acquisition. More information about the reading curriculum is provided in the following section.

The Social Studies TEKS encompass history, geography, economics, government, citizenship, culture, and science, technology and society. Students are supported in communicating in oral and visual forms and in using problem-solving and decision-making skills to work independently and with others.

Social Studies is taught through current events, customs and traditions, and model lessons provided by CLEAR Online. Burrus students participate in annual History Fairs. In 2009, students in grades 3-5 produced 70 projects, and the five campus winners advanced to the regional round where one Burrus student garnered third place overall. Burrus also invites numerous career and community speakers, authors, astronauts, and black pilots to bring a real-world view of social studies to students and parents.

The Science TEKS teach scientific processes and concepts through simple classroom and field investigations to help students develop the skills of asking questions, gathering information, making measurements using non-standard units, constructing explanations, and drawing conclusions. Students also use computers and information technology tools to support their investigations.

Burrus outfits two science labs, one primary (PreK-2) and one intermediate (3-5). Students participate in weekly science labs from 45-90 minutes each, and Burrus conducts an annual Science Fair. Summer school sessions incorporate robotics and other science enrichment activities.

Burrus is a community-based magnet school for the Fine Arts, which includes music, photography, art, dance, band, orchestra, and gymnastics. Our dancers are renowned throughout the city for their jazz, ballet, lyrical, hip hop, and gospel styles. Several students participate in the citywide Houston Children's Choir, and our Art Department supports student entries into the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Burrus has also produced numerous nationally known jazz, opera, and theater stars.

For all curriculum areas, instruction is delivered through multiple modalities. Burrus faculty are well grounded in differentiated learning and learning styles and use the Renzulli Learning's Differentiation Engine, which provides teachers with differentiated enrichment and instructional strategies so that they can reach all students.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

(This question is for elementary schools only)

Academic standards in the Burrus reading curriculum specifically address print awareness, phonological awareness, letter-sound relationships, vocabulary development, comprehension, literary response, text structures, literary concepts, inquiry and research, and culture and are imbued via the Success For All (SFA) Reading program, a whole-school reform model that includes a reading, writing, and oral language development program for all students (PreK-5). Burrus students perform in the top 10% of schools using SFA, and as a result, posted academic gains of 21% on the state reading exam (from 2006-2009), as compared with 2% for SFA schools statewide.

Classroom instruction is delivered in daily 90-minute blocks to students grouped by reading ability. Immediate intervention by teachers is given each day to those students who are having difficulty reading at the same level as their classmates. Students in grades K-3 who are particularly struggling receive an extra 30 minutes of Reading First intervention, and teachers develop Individual Education Plans for at-risk students in grades 4 and 5.

The U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences maintains a "What Works Clearinghouse" (WWC) that has this to say, "Based on seven studies of Success For All, the WWC considers the extent of evidence for SFA to be medium to large for alphabetics, comprehension, and general reading achievement....Success for All was found to have positive effects on alphabetics, mixed effects for comprehension, and potentially positive effects on general reading achievement."

Success for All includes an integrated writing component, which Burrus teachers know is essential to round out development of reading/language arts skills. In support of statewide writing evaluation that occurs at the elementary level only in grade 4, Burrus has organized a school-wide writing team made up of ten highly trained teachers who grade all 4th-grade writing samples to ensure consistent writing evaluation across the board. Teachers operate Saturday tutorials that provide additional instruction, remediation, and enrichment for writing development.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

Burrus students' love for math is evident in their achievement as well as in their interest and engagement with the content and resources provided to them. Our mathematics teachers focus on developing students' understanding and appreciation of mathematics while teaching skills that will ensure their success in academically rigorous programs at the middle school level. Our learning community's commitment to year-round education can be seen in our supportive, individualized mathematics tutorial program (offered four days per week, all year) and our challenging summer enrichment program, as well as in numerous family education and involvement opportunities.

The overall mathematics curriculum is aligned with the school's mission to be "an exemplary school where high expectations are standard and character will be developed in a technological world." In support of this,

Burrus teachers infuse technology into math instruction in order to provide engaging, real-world, hands-on experiences that encourage inquisitive young minds to take responsibility for their own learning.

Burrus's mathematics instructors use state-of-the-art technologies, including SmartBoards, Reasoning Minds (RM) and a wide variety of manipulatives in the daily curriculum. Reasoning Minds, in particular, keeps math rigorous, engaging, individualized, and cutting-edge. RM enjoys a wide base of partner organizations such as ExxonMobil Foundation, Houston A+ Challenge, the Houston Museum of Natural Science, TechCorps Texas, and Technology for All. Technology sponsors include Cisco, Oracle, and Google, among others, ensuring RM's goal of "a first-rate math education for every child." This broad-based technology partnership benefits Burrus's population of inner-city, economically disadvantaged students who would not otherwise have access to a technology-infused math curriculum, and the benefits show in much more than just skyrocketing test scores. In the words of Reasoning Minds, "Imagine a day when children love their math class so much, they do math problems at home instead of playing video games." Indeed.

4. Instructional Methods:

Burrus teachers teach children, not subjects. Recognizing that all children have diverse physical, social, emotional, and academic needs, each teacher focuses on which learning styles and instructional methods will have the biggest impact on each child. To this end, Burrus faculty members employ the Renzulli Learning's Differentiation Engine, which provides teachers with differentiated enrichment and instruction for all students and supports in-depth research for projects and investigations required of all identified Gifted and Talented students. Teachers keep detailed profiles on all students' interests and learning styles so they are able to easily group students for instruction, creativity training, problem-solving, and enrichment based on these factors.

Thirteen percent of Burrus students are identified as Limited-English Proficient (LEP) who receive intensive English-language immersion to accelerate their English-language development. Academic progress for these students is assessed using the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, and the overall educational program for all LEP students is monitored and guided by Burrus's Language Proficiency Assessment Committee. Any discrepancies between their performance and that of non-LEP students are addressed immediately through age-appropriate instructional strategies.

Burrus takes an inclusive approach to Gifted and Talented instruction and exposes all students to GT activities and instruction. All teachers have completed 30 hours of mandatory GT training and participate in six hours of update training annually.

Students served by Special Education classes and interventions also have top-notch support. Last year, 100% of all students with individual assessment modifications passed at their modified level, which is a testament to the degree of individualization that Burrus teachers and staff provide.

Finally, Texas notes the progress of each ethnic group (African American, Hispanic, and white) as well as that of economically disadvantaged students and those served by Special Education. For each identified group at Burrus, there is no significant difference in academic performance beyond grade 3 when the TAKS test is first administered.

5. Professional Development:

All teachers are required by the district to participate in at least 45 hours of professional development per year, but with the support and leadership of the school principal who provides resources for additional training and the expectation of much higher standards, Burrus teachers easily exceed that requirement by 25 hours a year or more. For the past several years, Burrus has benefited from state-funded teacher incentive pay grants, which reward teachers for "above and beyond" professional development engagement, but even without these funds, it is not uncommon to find Burrus's teachers participating in 100-200 hours of training, especially when their college-level coursework is considered.

At the beginning of the school year, Burrus teachers attend nine full days of professional development. This year's topics included curriculum frameworks, Renzulli (learning styles), Success For All (reading), Rice University School Math Project, ExxonMobil math/science program, safety, sexual harassment prevention, teacher evaluation systems, and team-building and empowerment. These areas of focus are carefully planned for and integrate with Burrus's written School Improvement Plan to align with the state-level standards known as TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) as well as with professional development standards in the content areas. These full days are followed during the year with six half-days of professional development and parental involvement opportunities, for Burrus believes that such training must extend from the teacher to encompass the student and the family if students are to truly succeed.

At other times, as required by the district or at the request of faculty members, lead teachers attend district trainings, which equip them with new, scientifically based research and resources. Teachers return to campus energized to demonstrate lessons, co-teach, model new practices, or otherwise share information with their fellow teachers or content-area team teachers in order to strengthen and improve teaching and learning school-wide.

6. School Leadership:

Mr. Jessie Woods has been the instructional leader of Burrus Elementary since April 2000. His "outside the box" leadership and guidance over the past ten years has resulted in high levels of trust from community members, parents, and families, as well as from his dedicated staff who tell how he creates additional school improvement goals not required by his superiors because he knows that reaching them will improve learning for all. While exploring the link between behavior and academics, Mr. Woods crafted a behavioral intervention and counseling program that produced two measurable results: in one year, student suspensions decreased from 51 to only 7, and student achievement soared. This above and beyond level of dedication endears his teachers, students, parents, and community members and creates a whole-school leadership team.

Mr. Woods takes his role as instructional leader seriously, instructing students and modeling best practices for his teaching staff on a weekly basis. He is supported by an Instructional, Magnet, Limited-English Proficient, and Special Education Coordinators; a Dyslexia Representative; a Literacy Coach; Communities in Schools staff; a contract counselor; and a school-based counselor in addition to several office and operations staff members. Many of these staff also comprise the Family Support Team, which intervenes with whatever wraparound services are necessary to ensure that students get the support they need to remain successful.

Finally, Mr. Woods works in concert with Burrus's Site-based Decision-making Committee to create, implement, review, and revise academic and operations policies for the school that are aligned with the Burrus mission and that support school safety, student achievement, parent involvement, and professional growth for all school staff. These policies have resulted in a learning environment that has literally been open to students, parents, and the community seven days a week for ten years, making us proud to say that Burrus truly is a community school.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: TAKS

Edition/Publication Year: Published new by grade level each year of administration

Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	97	96	75	48
% Commended	41	59	55	10	9
Number of students tested	44	39	53	52	44
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	96	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	4	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	97	96	75	48
% Commended	40	59	55	10	9
Number of students tested	42	39	51	51	44
2. African American Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	100	96	74	47
% Commended	31	52	58	9	9
Number of students tested	29	25	45	46	34
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	92			
% Commended	60	77			
Number of students tested	15	13			
4. Special Education Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	1	1
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	97	97	73	40
% Commended	36	59	46	8	6
Number of students tested	39	34	37	40	35

Notes: The largest other subgroup not listed above is "At Risk".

The source for all data listed above is the "Administration Summary, TAKS Summary Report: Test Performance, All Students by grade level".

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: TAKS

Edition/Publication Year: Published new by grade level each year of administration

Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Feb	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	95	79	70	62
% Commended	64	45	27	21	14
Number of students tested	44	38	50	56	42
Percent of total students tested	100	100	95	98	93
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	3	2	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	5	2	7
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	95	80	69	62
% Commended	64	45	26	22	14
Number of students tested	42	38	50	55	42
2. African American Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	100	82	68	56
% Commended	72	56	32	22	13
Number of students tested	29	25	44	50	32
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	92			
% Commended	47	25			
Number of students tested	15	12			
4. Special Education Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	97	73	68	54
% Commended	62	41	16	14	11
Number of students tested	39	34	37	44	35

Notes:

The largest other subgroup not listed above is "At Risk".

The source for all data listed above is the "Administration Summary, TAKS Report: Test Performance, All Students by grade level".

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: TAKS

Edition/Publication Year: Published new by grade level each year of administration

Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	91	98	85	50
% Commended	27	36	33	20	12
Number of students tested	33	44	45	40	52
Percent of total students tested	100	98	100	95	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	2	0	5	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	90	98	84	49
% Commended	33	40	36	19	13
Number of students tested	33	42	42	37	47
2. African American Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	92	97	82	44
% Commended	20	38	32	18	5
Number of students tested	20	39	38	33	41
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100				73
% Commended	42				36
Number of students tested	12				11
4. Special Education Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	0	92	64	10
% Commended	30	0	23	0	0
Number of students tested	10	0	13	14	10

Notes:

The largest other subgroup not listed above is "At Risk".

The source for all data listed above is the "Administration Summary, TAKS Report: Test Performance, All Students by grade level".

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: TAKS

Edition/Publication Year: Published new by grade level each year of administration

Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	91	96	77	60
% Commended	33	36	58	8	8
Number of students tested	33	44	45	39	50
Percent of total students tested	100	98	100	93	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	3	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	2	0	7	4
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	90	95	78	60
% Commended	30	40	60	8	7
Number of students tested	33	42	42	36	45
2. African American Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	92	95	78	56
% Commended	45	41	61	6	5
Number of students tested	20	39	38	32	39
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100				73
% Commended	17				18
Number of students tested	12				11
4. Special Education Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100		92	64	
% Commended	20		23	0	
Number of students tested	10		13	14	

Notes:

The largest other subgroup not listed above is "At Risk".

The source for all data listed above is the "Administration Summary, TAKS Report, Test Performance, All Students by grade level."

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: TAKS

Edition/Publication Year: Published new by grade level each year of administration

Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	98	100	89	52
% Commended	80	56	67	62	7
Number of students tested	41	50	36	47	54
Percent of total students tested	100	100	90	92	90
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	4	4	6
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	10	8	10
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	98	100	88	52
% Commended	80	58	68	57	8
Number of students tested	40	45	34	46	52
2. African American Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	100	100	90	51
% Commended	83	56	61	61	6
Number of students tested	36	39	28	31	47
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	0	90	0	88	0
% Commended	0	50	0	63	0
Number of students tested	0	10	0	16	0
4. Special Education Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Met standard plus % Commended		100	100	84	29
% Commended		23	50	48	10
Number of students tested		13	14	25	21

Notes:

The largest other subgroup not listed above is "At Risk".

The source for all data listed above is the "Administraion Summary, TAKS Report: Test Performance, All Students by grade level."

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: TAKS

Edition/Publication Year: Published new by grade level each year of administration

Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Feb	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	90	75	74	52
% Commended	39	24	14	13	5
Number of students tested	41	49	36	47	58
Percent of total students tested	100	100	88	92	92
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	5	4	5
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	12	8	8
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	89	74	74	52
% Commended	43	32	14	13	5
Number of students tested	40	44	35	46	56
2. African American Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended	100	89	75	74	55
% Commended	42	26	14	6	6
Number of students tested	36	38	28	31	51
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended		90		75	
% Commended		20		25	
Number of students tested		10		16	
4. Special Education Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Met standard plus % Commended					
% Commended					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Met standard plus % Commended		83	64	60	26
% Commended		0	7	12	0
Number of students tested		12	14	25	23

Notes:

The largest other subgroup not listed above is "At Risk".

The source for all data listed above is the "Administration Summary, TAKS Report: Test Performance, All students by grade level."